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THE MILITANT PEACE CORPS

[Article by Ya. Valakh; Kiev, Literaturna Ukraina, Ukrainian, 18 July 1969, p 2]

A sorry accident recently befell a certain Mr Walt Colby from the United States while in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa. That Colby, in his official capacity as a "Corpsman," that is, a member of the so-called "Peace Corps" of the United States, undertook to give advice to Ethiopian writers. The uninvited mentor displayed such ignorance in literary matters, praised the "American way of life" so importunately and showed such disrespect for Ethiopian national traditions that his listeners, to put it bluntly, showed Mr Colby the door....

Later on it turned out that the shameless Corpsman launched in Addis Ababa a new kind of activity by the "Peace Corps:" "assistance" to under-developed countries in literary and art affairs.

The incident with Walt Colby was particularly dismaying to the "Peace Corps" because it occurred just when the beginning of a "new stage" in the activity of this organization was being trumpeted in the United States. "The new stage" is connected with the appointment of a new and the fourth director of the "Peace Corps," Joseph Blatchford, the former Chief Consultant for Latin American Affairs at the U.S. Department of State. On taking the oath in the White House Blatchford announced that he came to the "Peace Corps" with an already well-developed plan of action in his new post which, supposedly, would assure a swift revival of the activity of this organization and lay the foundation for a "new stage" in its history.

It must be admitted that Joseph Blatchford inherited unpleasant matters of business from his predecessors in the post of Director of the "Peace Corps." This organization, in which barely several years ago Washington had been placing great hopes, recently has been suffering one failure after another. But it can be said in advance that neither Blatchford nor any one else can do anything about it. The failures of the "Peace Corps" are not a legacy of the activity of poor directors but ensue from the very principles on which this organization was based, as one of the instruments of foreign policy and ideological expansion of the United States. The failures of the

"Peace Corps" merely reflect the routing of Washington's imperialist policy, of its anti-communist line.

Let us return to certain moments in the history and past activity of the "Peace Corps." The official date of its establishment is considered 1 March 1961, when the then President of the United States John Kennedy signed the decree for the establishment of the "Corps." The official purposes of this organization are considered to be, as stated in the Presidential decree, "assistance by highly trained experts to other countries," and "assistance in the great common cause of the development of the entire world." But all these high-sounding phrases are only a handsome screen masking the true purposes of the "Peace Corps."

Certain persons from Washington who stood close to the cradle of the "Corps" expressed more concretely the purposes of their child. The former head of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Taylor, said that his soldiers alone can no longer combat the national liberation movement in various countries. This requires also "simple American boys" who do not wear a military uniform. Another general, Trudeau, spoke with no less candor about the newly created "Peace Corps" as of yet another means of struggle against "communist ideas and communist and semi-communist regimes." And when these problems were being discussed in the U.S. House of Representatives, Henry Reuss, the zealous proponent of the idea of establishing the "Corps," put forward the thesis that, supposedly, Soviet experts would win sympathy throughout the world and this "communist influence" should be urgently counteracted by American influence while there was still time....

Thus behind the noble facade of the new organization hid yet another center of the struggle against the national liberation movements of the nations, yet another center of U.S. imperialist expansion. The matter concerned again the "rollback of communism"--that insane dream of modern imperialism.

Such imperialist camouflaging of its true aims was mentioned by L.I. Brezhnev in his speech at the International Conference of Communist and Workers Parties in Moscow on 7 June 1969. He declared: "Imperialism cannot count on success by openly proclaiming its true aims. It is forced to create an entire system of ideological myths obscuring the true meaning of its intentions and dulling the vigilance of the nations. To this end it has created a giant machinery of propaganda which exploits all the current possibilities for ideological influence."

A component part of this propaganda machinery in the United States is also the "Peace Corps." No money was spared for it. The budget of the "Corps" has been rising from year to year, having reached hundreds of millions of dollars. In 1965 "Peace Corps" teams have operated already in 46 countries throughout the world. But the more the "Corps" has been broadening its activities, the more money it has been receiving from the U.S. Government, the more clearly the world has perceived the true purpose of that organization. The first director of the "Corps," Sargent Shriver, was

forced to resign precisely because of the numerous scandals which accompanied the very first steps of these "Corpsmen." For the same reasons the second director, Jack Hood Vaughn, also left his post.

Members of the "Peace Corps" came to the various countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America in the capacity of experts--teachers, geologists, agronomists, engineers. But very soon these countries became convinced that all these "Corpsmen" were no experts, and that the true profession of the "simple American boys" from the "Peace Corps" was in no way related to teaching, geology or agronomy.

Soon something curious became known about the principles for the selection and training of the "Corpsmen." This matter was for some reason handled chiefly by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. The very name "Corpsman" greatly resembled the appellation of ordinary intelligence agents and saboteurs. The pseudo-teachers, pseudo-geologists and pseudo-agronomists were being taught to operate various kinds of weapons, to climb trees, to swim underwater, to write in code. ✓

In Tunisia, Mexico, Chile, and Ceylon, "Corpsmen" were caught in the process of gathering intelligence, distributing printed material directed against the governments of these countries, and impudently engaging in subversive activities. Exposés were published by the periodical Jeune Afrique, the Ceylonese newspaper Forward, the Chilean El Siglo. Some of the most insolent "Corpsmen" were simply expelled from the country.

It was in vain that the then Secretary of State of the United States Dean Rusk outdid himself to prove that, first, the "Peace Corps" is not at all an instrument of Washington's foreign policy, nor God [sic] forbid, of the CIA, the American intelligence service, and second, that those unfortunate incidents with individual "Corpsmen" were nothing more than minor misunderstandings. It was in vain that Rusk and, following him, the organs of the American press argued that the representatives of the "Peace Corps" are "disinterested friends" of the developing countries.

To somehow rectify the situation, the U.S. Government even tried to conceal the activity of its "Peace Corps" under the screen of the United Nations. In particular, it presented for the consideration of the U.N. Economic and Social Council a proposal for the "Utilization of Volunteers to Implement the Programs of the United Nations for Economic and Social Progress in the Underdeveloped Countries." But this cunning attempt failed.

As is known, the failures and mistakes of the "Peace Corps" have not led to the discontinuation of its activities. The propaganda machinery of the United States has at its disposal sufficient resources to spread lies and to mask its imperialist aims. Currently these resources are being oriented toward spreading claims about some "new stage" in the activity of the "Peace Corps," about its reorganization and the recruitment of "the best experts." In particular, it is said that, supposedly, "upon request of the

intelligentsia of various countries," the "Corpsmen" from now on will also include experts in the problems of literature and fine arts....That these experts have already begun to ply their activities is evidenced by the incident in Addis Ababa.

Another new aspect of the activity of the "Peace Corps" is that its directors are trying to establish some kind of an "International Peace Corps." They already have reached an understanding with Bonn, although the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Bonn Willy Brandt has proposed a somewhat different variant, to wit, the united American-West German "Corps." The Minister of Information in Franco's Spain, Iribarne also has become greatly enthused with this idea.

Well, all this is quite normal. It was exactly the International Conference of Communist and Workers Parties in Moscow that pointed to those who, under the banner of anticommunism, are now uniting the most reactionary forces in the world. They disdain no means in order to obstruct the development of national liberation movements and they engage in the most insolent ideological diversionary activities. The American "Peace Corps" also is part of the shock troops in the anti-communist campaign of world reaction. This can be concealed neither by its director nor by those "disinterested" representatives of the "Corps" who are shown the door with increasing frequency.

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